

ANTELOPE VALLEY EARNS CLEAN CITIES DESIGNATION

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) has approved the AVAPCD's application to expand the area's Clean Cities Coalition to encompass the entire Antelope Valley, and endorsed its five-year plan for expanding the region's alternative fuel vehicle (AFV) market.

Originally conceived in 1995 as the Lancaster Clean Cities Coalition, the redesignated Antelope Valley Clean Cities Coalition now represents the cities of Lancaster and Palmdale, as well as unincorporated regions of Los Angeles County within the Antelope Valley. The local coalition boasts more than 50 stakeholders, including representatives from the two incorporated cities within its boundaries, L.A. County, local utility companies, numerous local businesses, and the AVAPCD.

The Antelope Valley Clean Cities Coalition is one of 79 coalitions nationwide which have voluntarily joined to support the DOE's Clean Cities Program, a locally based government/industry partnership which aims to expand the use of alternatives to gasoline and diesel fuel. To this end, Clean Cities Coalitions throughout the country work actively to increase the number of AFVs and refueling stations in their respective regions, educate the public and advance legislation and incentives which promote AFVs.

With the support of the City of Lancaster, the DOE asked the AVAPCD to assume leadership of the local Clean Cities Program last year. As lead agency, the AVAPCD was required to coordinate the renewal process for the existing Clean Cities designation, which was set to expire by the end of 2000. To this end, the AVAPCD contracted with Thomason and Associates - a Las Vegas-based consultant that recently completed the City of Las Vegas Clean Cities redesignation plan - to develop a five-year program plan for expanding AFV usage in the Antelope Valley. Soon thereafter, the AVAPCD began holding stakeholder meetings for the purpose of gauging ongoing interest in AFVs, recruiting additional stakeholders and soliciting input to the program plan.

The plan - which was approved by the DOE on January 19, 2001 - is the mechanism by which individual stakeholders formalize their commitment to transitioning to alternative fuels. Goals identified as part of the Antelope Valley's plan include increasing the number of natural gas, propane and electric charging stations in the region; increasing the number of stakeholders from private fleets to 30%; and exploring funding sources for Clean Cities activities.

According to AVAPCD Chairman and City of Lancaster Mayor Frank Roberts, the Antelope Valley's redesignation as a Clean City region serves as an incentive to businesses considering relocation to the Antelope Valley. "Being recognized for the quality of our air gives us an edge in attracting businesses," commented Roberts. "The designation carries positive economic and redevelopment implications." Roberts added that he is proud that the Clean Cities designation - which was unique to the City of Lancaster - now extends over the entire region.

A ceremony in honor of the Clean Cities re-designation is planned for Pollution Prevention Week in September at the installation site of a public access CNG refueling station in Lancaster. Plans for the ceremony include speakers from the community and a display of various alternative fuel vehicles.

The next meeting of the Antelope Valley Clean Cities Coalition is scheduled for Thursday, June 14, at 1:30 PM at AVAPCD headquarters, which are located at 43301 Division Street, Suite 206, Lancaster. For more information, call (661) 723-8070.